

# TWO COATS OF PAINT

November 21, 2019

## *Yulia Iosilzon: Trapped in Paradise*



Contributed by Catherine Haggarty / “Yulia Iosilzon: Paradeisos” – the first solo exhibition of the London-based artist, smartly curated by Kate Mothes – is currently on view at Carvalho Park. Continuing to explore and challenge boundaries separating performance, installation, textile, sculpture, design, painting, and drawing, this abundant gallery space nicely showcases Iosilzon’s twelve striking nine-foot-high paintings. Stacking forms, she de-emphasizes deep physical space in favor of frontal dominance: content tumbles from the foreground of the paintings. Soft shapes conjure what a jungle might look like. In most pieces, black line neatly bounds color, which operates sensitively but subordinately on silicone silk and canvas surfaces.

The paintings’ imagery imparts a sense of escaping, hiding, and at times hunting. Several small, unassuming sculptures scattered around the gallery seem to signify offerings. The ostensibly casual appearance of the paintings gives the impression of effortless execution, but it is clear upon closer inspection that they are carefully and confidently rendered. Self-assurance in contemporary painting is often equated with the fast, clean execution of consistent brushstrokes.

Iosilzon, however, deftly incorporates drawing into her work while maintaining its painterly integrity. Her enigmatically tropical forms and jangled landscapes reminded me of the sweet and insistent tension that artists like Joshua Bienko and Brian Scott Campbell imbue in their work.

Iosilzon provides little specific context, suggesting a utopian environment whose inhabitants are reluctant to depart, happily trapped in paradise. But any idyll, in Iosilzon's conception, remains subject to disruption. Perhaps the most viscerally charged of the paintings on view is *Fear of Orange Water (The Shower)*. This large canvas depicts what seem to be the faces of several people in a shower trying to evade a predator. The piece powerfully conveys confusion and impulsiveness, resonant of Philip Guston's allusion to cravings. As with most of Iosilzon's scenes, this one is simultaneously other-worldly and familiar. It's unclear where and how it might arise, yet it also feels fundamentally true. This dual quality pervades her work and, playful though that work can be, lends it mythical power.

*"Yulia Iosilzon: Paradeisos," curated by Kate Mothes. Carvalho Park, 112 Waterbury Street, Brooklyn, NY. Through November 24, 2019 (by appointment through December 2).*

**About the author: Catherine Haggarty is an artist, curator and writer. She is a part-time faculty member at SVA and serves as co-director at the NYC Crit Club. Her 2011 M.F.A is from Mason Gross, Rutgers University.**